

notice in writing that it is my intention to offer an amendment to the Standing Rules of the Senate, by proposing Amendment No. 1737 to S. 1813.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

##### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 29, 2012, at 11 a.m., to hold a briefing entitled, "Update on the Crisis in Syria."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled "Dental Crisis in America: The Need to Expand Access" on February 29, 2012, at 10 a.m., in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on February 29, 2012, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "The Due Process Guarantee Act: Banning Indefinite Detention of Americans."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session on February 29, 2012, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Nominations."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session on February 29, 2012. The Committee will meet in room 418 of the Senate Russell Office Building beginning at 10 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask consent that floor privileges be granted to Andy Remo and Jesse Haladay, two of Senator CARDIN's legislative staff members, during today's session of the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following staff of the Finance Committee be allowed on the Senate floor for the duration of the debate on S. 1813: Johannes Echeverri, Whitney Lott, Samson Chen, Edward Torres, Derrick Riggins, Elizabeth Samson, Amanda Summers, and Danielle Dellerson.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRANSPORTATION BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, before I start the closing script, I want it to be spread on the record that we have tried all day to come up with an agreement to move forward on this legislation, and we have been unsuccessful.

This is a piece of legislation that is as bipartisan as is humanly possible. We have one of the most progressive Members of the Senate, Senator BOXER, and one of the most conservative Members of the Senate, JIM INHOFE, who are cosponsoring this legislation. It is a piece of legislation that continues the highway program, the surface transportation program. It is so needed.

Yesterday, I had the director of the department of transportation in Nevada, Susan Martinovich, come in. I am confident that most Senators have had someone from their States here and had a conference. It will bring construction in Nevada to a standstill on our highways and bridges and some of the mass transit programs if we don't move forward. But we can't even get on the bill.

I have agreed to do this unrelated amendment. My caucus agreed we will do these. We don't want to; they are not productive. They are message amendments, and they are not germane or relevant. But we will do a limited number of these bad amendments. There have been over 100 of them filed.

I am at a loss for words as to what the Republicans expect me to do—stand around for another week and look at each other?

We started moving to this bill on February 7. The amendment we are going to vote on tomorrow, out of nowhere, on a transportation bill, is dealing with contraception. We have agreed to have votes on it. They will not let us have votes. Yesterday, I had to bring up a Republican amendment they didn't even bother to file. They just wanted to talk about it and hold press conferences on the issue.

Unless something changes, I am going to have to file cloture on this bill, and we are going to have to find out if the Republicans really want destruction all across the 50 States and have another hit to our economy by not doing highway construction, especially as the weather is getting better. In the Presiding Officer's State of Oregon, which is just like Nevada, where unemployment has not been good, a lot can go on. I have no alternative but to file cloture to stop the filibuster. It is

one of these roving filibusters where all these phantom people will not let us move forward on this legislation.

I am almost embarrassed to be saying this in front of the Presiding Officer. I say that because at the beginning of the year the Presiding Officer, along with the junior Senator from New Mexico, thought maybe we should change how this place operates. A number of us, in good conscience, believed the few changes we had made would be sufficient to establish a better working situation. It hasn't been better. In fact, I am sorry to say, it is worse.

So we are going to—unless something happens—have a vote tomorrow. Can you imagine, I created a vote because they would not allow us to have a vote? So I don't see what choice I have.

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2012

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, the Senate adjourn until Thursday, March 1, at 9:30 a.m.; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of S. 1813, the surface transportation bill, with the time until 11 a.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; that at 11 a.m. the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the Blunt amendment No. 1520; and that all provisions under the previous order remain in effect.

I am going to say this now—I will ask consent in the morning, Mr. President—I want to have the full hour and a half to have this matter debated. We will come in tomorrow at 9:30, so there will be an hour and a half. I want to make sure we have that full time. So I will ask unanimous consent that the statements of Senator MCCONNELL and myself not count against the hour and a half, but I will do that tomorrow.

I now ask the Chair to approve my earlier request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at 11 a.m. tomorrow the Senate will proceed to vote in relation to the Blunt amendment No. 1520 on contraception and health care. Tomorrow we will continue to work on a path forward on the Transportation bill, as I have outlined previously.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.